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King speech public domain

ATLANTA (AP) — A federal judge's decision that Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech belongs to the public could be a hard financial blow for his widow and children.

Dr. King's most famous speech, delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, probably generates more income than any of his other copyrighted material, said Clayborne Carson, a leading King scholar and the director of Stanford University's repository of Dr. King's papers.

Judge William O'Kelley ruled Wednesday in favor of CBS News, which the King estate had sued for copyright infringement. O'Kelley noted that Dr. King did not copyright his speech before distributing advance copies to reporters.